- Show respect for the other side.
- Unite with others who generally share your values. Be willing to compromise with coalition members to maintain a united front and communication strategy.
- Be proactive, not reactive. Play offense, not defense.
- Display controlled passion and dignity in making your case.
- Find stories where your frame connects with the audience.

The Ethics of Framing

In addition to providing guidelines for engaging in debate, the author makes some important distinctions between two unethical practices in framing issues—spin and propaganda. He defines "spin" as putting "an innocent frame on an embarrassing occurrence to make it sound normal or good." Propaganda is "an attempt to get the public to adopt a frame that is not true and is known not to be true, for the purposes of gaining or maintaining political control." Deceptive framing is often used to cover up a weakness in the advocate's position. Some organizations, for example, call their new and reduced health insurance benefits package the "security plus" health plan. The phrase conjures up images of enhanced health protection, when in reality employees are paying more and receiving less. In Lakoff's words, "Deceptive framing is not only reprehensible, but usually breeds cynicism and reduced credibility." Authentic framing, on the other hand, conveys genuine values and beliefs in support of a course of action. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, for example, envisioned a country where the "Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics will join hands" to celebrate a new condition of freedom in our country. His authentic use of language changed our country forever.

This book is clearly a partisan treatise that may, at times, oversimplify and misrepresent conservative positions. Nonetheless, it provides valuable insight about the art and science of framing messages for political advantage. Lakoff teaches us that "frames trump facts" and that presenting genuinely felt values that link to people's identity is a powerful means for building support.

In the world of public administration, extraordinary leaders need to assess changing external conditions, formulate missions and visions, reposition priorities, reorganize structures, build a winning culture, redeploy staff, build networks of coproducers, and create new human resource and information technology systems, among other actions. Given these responsibilities, authentic framing is an additional tool for building support to generate meaningful change. A change initiative can be framed in terms of enhancing citizen value, preserving democracy, building organization capacity, and giving meaning to one's professional life. A skillfully framed message can tap into an employee's identity as steward of the public interest, who works with a sense of pride to create meaningful results. George Lakoff's book, *Don't Think of an Elephant*, is a reasonably good choice if your goal is to learn how to strategically express values that attract a following and unite people in pursuit of worthy goals.

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